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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6528
INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS PRIORITY
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 4367
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1292
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY 3469
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0894
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON 1836
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JAKARTA 002776

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DEPT FOR EAP, EAP/MTS, EAP/MLS, INR/EAP
NSC FOR EPHU

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KISL](#) [PINR](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: COUNT HIM IN -- JAKARTA GOVERNOR TAKES THE
PRESIDENTIAL PLUNGE

REF: A. JAKARTA 2748

[1](#)B. JAKARTA 1157

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Classified By: Pol/C Joseph Legend Novak, reasons 1.4(b,d).

[¶](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Jakarta Governor Sutiyoso has formally entered the 2009 presidential hunt. Sutiyoso--who will step down after ten years as governor on October 7--removed what little doubt remained about his big-time ambitions with his long-anticipated announcement. According to Mission contacts, it is questionable whether Sutiyoso can really gain traction given that he is not well-known outside of Jakarta and is not especially charismatic. Bio notes are contained in para 7. END SUMMARY.

MAKING A SPLASH

[¶](#)2. (U) Sutiyoso's October 1 Hollywood-style announcement at a ballroom in Jakarta's fashionable Four Seasons Hotel ended months of speculation about his presidential aspirations. Former president Abdurrahman Wahid and former vice president Try Sutrisno were among the political luminaries on hand for the event, which received extensive media coverage throughout Indonesia. (Note: We understand that neither Wahid nor Sutrisno actually endorsed the governor at the occasion.) In his "political declaration of intent," Sutisyoso (one name only) announced that:

"I dare to name myself a presidential candidate because, first, I've received support from a number of political parties and leading figures, especially since a year ago. And, second, because I'm called on to continue serving the country."

[¶](#)3. (C) According to Roy Janis, the founder of the Democratic Renewal Party (PDP), Sutiyoso started laying the groundwork for a presidential bid in 2006. Sutiyoso first approached Janis for PDP's support in March of 2007, and according to Janis, has been making similar overtures across the political spectrum. Yuddy Chrisnandi, a M.P. from Golkar, also reported that Sutiyoso has been actively recruiting Golkar operatives for his campaign. Yuddy told poloff that former

Indonesian National Intelligence Chief (BIN) Hendropriyono heads Sutiyoso's electoral steering committee, which is called (optimistically, perhaps) "Team Success."

BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY

¶4. (C) Sutiyoso has a tough guy reputation. According to a number of Mission contacts, Sutiyoso's primary weapons in the presidential race will be a sizeable war chest and a reputation for decisiveness. Roy Janis told poloff that "money would be no object" for Sutiyoso and that with his hand-picked successor Fauzi Bowo in the Jakarta governor's office come October 7, he will have an important ally. As for his reputation for decisiveness, Sutiyoso has won begrudging respect from supporters and detractors alike for managing the unwieldy metropolis of Jakarta with a firm hand.

Not everyone appreciates the governor's direct and unyielding military-type style, but he has gained respect from many for his ability to achieve goals--such as the development of very controversial bus lanes--by any means necessary.

HE'S BIG -- IN JAKARTA

¶5. (C) Despite the big announcement, Sutiyoso is not well-known outside of the capital. In his presidential declaration, Sutiyoso sought to confront this by dubiously asserting that "thanks to the press, people in other regions know me quite well because of the abundant news about me in a lot of mass media." However, unlike prospective presidential challengers Megawati Soekarnoputri, Sri Sultan Hamengkubuwono X, and Wiranto, Mission contacts maintain that Sutisyoso does not yet have a national profile. Thus far, the national polling--where Sutiyoso is not doing all that well--would appear to bear that out.

A CONTENDER?

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¶6. (C) Like fellow presidential aspirant Wiranto, Sutiyoso is flush with cash and seemingly well positioned to portray himself as an alternative to President Yudhoyono. Despite the disastrous flooding that took place on his watch in Jakarta earlier this year, many Jakartans still appear to hold Governor Sutiyoso in high regard. If Sutiyoso can replicate that popularity on a national level and convince some of the major parties to support his candidacy, he could well pose as formidable a challenge to President Yudhoyono as any of the other likely contenders. He is not particularly charismatic, however, and has never actually run in an election (he is an appointed governor).

BIO NOTES

¶7. (C) Mission has the following brief bio notes on Sutiyoso:

Sutiyoso: Born December 6, 1944, in Semarang---spent 25 years in the Army's Special Forces---spent several years as the Jakarta military commander during which time he supervised President Yudhoyono; members of the security forces under his command during this period controversially attacked PDI-P's headquarters on July 27, 1996, though that was blamed on a political decision made by then president Suharto---served as Governor of Jakarta (an appointed position until Fauzi Bowo won the first direct election for the job in August 2007) from 1997-present--does not speak much English.

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